

The Jacob Wills House  
Near Marlton, Evesham Township  
Burlington County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-597

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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The Jacob Wills House  
Near Marlton, Evesham Township  
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Owner: Albert Ott

Occupant: William Wolfrum

Dates of Erection: Main house 1789\*; west wing later

Architect: Unknown

Builder: Jacob Wills (original owner)\*

Present Condition: Original, except for modern front porches and window sash in the frame unit. Evidence of former wing enlarged and subsequently replaced by present frame unit. Modern leanto shed.

Number of Stories: Two and one-half, garret and part cellar

Materials of Construction:

Foundation - stone masonry rubblework  
Exterior walls - brick for main unit dated 1789, and timber frame clapboarded for minor unit

Interior walls - brick party wall and wood board or panelled partitions. Box stairway

Chimneys - brick, central in main unit and built into gable end of frame unit

Roof - gable, wood shingled; modern porches tin roofed

Historical Data:

The identity of the original owners of this post-Revolution house (of unique central chimney design) has been determined from the evidence discovered in searching the title as recorded in the public archives reported as follows.

\* See initials "I.M.W." for Jacob and Mary Wills and figures 1789 all in brickwork of east gable end.

By deed of 17 April 1773, Micajah Wills<sup>(a)</sup> and wife Rebecca of Evesham Township, Burlington County, conveyed to (their son) Jacob Wills and his wife Mary of the same place for 500 Pounds a tract of 195 acres there, the description given of its courses being such as to include those of the present 88 acre tract surrounding the house built thereon by the grantees in 1789 (as indicated by their initials "I.M.W." and figures built into the brickwork of the east gable end. The initial "I" was used for "J" by custom and was more easily formed in brickwork).

This Jacob and Mary Wills were deceased by 5 December 1806, on which date, in a division of their real estate among the heirs, the Orphans' Court ordered set off to their son Micajah Wills two pieces of land, on the 47 acres one of which stands the house abovementioned.

By deed of 1st December 1835, the last named with wife Margaret, being likewise of Evesham and evidently occupying the house, conveyed to William S., Samuel and Joseph Wills, all of that place, for \$8141 the same 47 acre tract, describing it as being "the Homestead Farm or Dwelling House and land whereon Micajah Wills lives", and reciting grantor's title to it from Jacob Wills as abovesaid.

The three grantees passed the tract as part of 88 acres, "with all and singular the buildings,

(a) James<sup>2</sup> Wills, the progenitor of the family in Evesham township, conveyed to his son Micajah<sup>3</sup> Wills, abovenamed, 386 acres there in 1746, and the latter devised it to his son Zebedee Wills in 1797. (Woodward and Hageman, History of Burlington and Mercer Counties, 1883, p. 325.) Micajah was grandson of Dr. Daniel Wills of Northampton, England, who came in the ship "Kent" to the site of Burlington, N. J. in 1677 and settled a plantation in Rancocas Creek, concerning which see our photo-data book NJ-541.

improvements", etc., to Jacob Wills of Evesham by their deed of 9 April 1840, for \$7000, and on 23 March 1883, the heirs of Wills last named passed title to Mary B. Haines wife of George Haines, of Medford Township, for \$9680, the same 88 acres.

By deed of 14 November 1906, the heirs of Mary B. Haines abovesaid conveyed the farm to George Olt of the same Township, for \$7084, from whom it descended to his widow and thence to his son Albert Olt, the present owner at the time of our survey of the house in 1940. William Wolfrum was then occupant thereof as tenant.

Reference:

Search of title in land and probate records of Burlington County and of the Provincial Secretary (the latter now deposited in the office of the Secretary of State) by Oscar F. Benjamin, research editor, reported 29 February 1940

Lewis D. Cook  
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams  
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.  
District Officer